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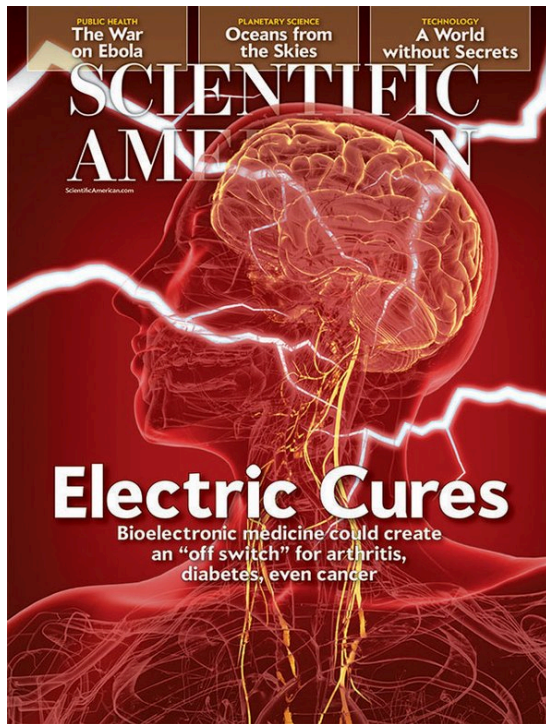
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ARTS & CULTURE

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Letters to the editor from the March 2015 issue of *Scientific American*



March 2015

FIGHTING EBOLA

Helen Branswell's "[Ebola War](#)" provides excellent coverage of the many unknowns regarding the Ebola virus, as well as the unprecedented speed with which the two most promising vaccines are being tested. Yet although vaccines, and greatly improved health care infrastructure, are essential to Ebola prevention and containment, little mention was made of another critical dimension: the early, active and sustained engagement of affected communities and their leaders and networks. Attacks on health care facilities and personnel, borne of rumors that the outsiders were intentionally spreading Ebola, are reminders that the best-intentioned efforts can fail when affected communities are not involved as part of the solution. Enhanced community engagement will be critical to vaccine testing and rollout in affected regions. But it will also help build local capacity and readiness before the next Ebola crisis has a chance to take hold.

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